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Town Hall Labyrinth Grows More Tangled

By Judith Epstein

The Town Hall has been in the limelight lately — whether for the good or the bad, however, is hard to tell.

Last week alone the Town Hall was officially certified by the Massachusetts Building Code Commission as a partially preserved building, inspected by State Building Inspector Joseph DiCicco — and surrounded by a flurry of controversy over the Town Offices Space Study Committee's plan for

renovation.

Two weeks ago, when Brett Donham of Donham and Sweeney Architects proposed the renovation plan at an open meeting, he indicated that the building would be exempt from certain requirements of the Basic Building Code if it was certified by both the Massachusetts Historic Commission (which it was last fall) and the State Building Code Commission. His statements met with a rebuttal from Building Inspector James Litchfield

who questioned the eligibility of the town hall to be renovated at all.

Litchfield was spurred by this doubt and by the fact that the Town Hall hadn't been inspected since Dec. 1974 and arranged to have the building examined by State Inspector DiCicco. Their findings were forwarded in a letter to the Board of Selectmen last week.

Litchfield and DiCicco found that the structure was generally non-conforming with the requirements of the State

Building Code, unprotected in many areas, and unable to meet fire resistance ratings, height limitations and use group requirements. These requirements referred specifically to the building's need for adequate 3/4 hour fire rating exitway access corridors and self-closing solid core 1 3/4" doors.

The area beneath the stage, the inspectors found, was particularly not conducive to the renovation plan's recommendation to remake the old dressing rooms there into an office area for the Recreation Department. In fact, they discerned that if the renovation plan were to be implemented, the cost would exceed more than 50 per cent of the current assessed valuation of the building — another prohibitive factor of the Code. Litchfield further noted that the Town Hall's certification as a partially preserved building precluded any change in use and occupancy.

The Selectmen's reaction to Litchfield's and DiCicco's inspection were mixed. Selectman Henry Ainslie said that Litchfield should act in an advisory fashion only and should not try to force his unrequested findings on town officials. "The only one who can be ultimately heard is the town," he said of the town meeting decision on the plan, which has been submitted for consideration by the study committee.

Selectman Arthur Clark defended Litchfield's inspection of the building in that he was responding to questions that were raised at the open meeting and wanted the backing of the state inspector. Clark voiced his dislike of the proposed plan at the public meeting and was of the opinion that he spoke for most Town Hall employees.

The board also received the letter informing them of the building's recent certification as partially preserved. Selectman Ainslie made the observation, "I don't want to use exemptions (available to partially preserved buildings) to circumvent good safety practices."

Architect Brett Donham spoke in behalf of the plan and the Study

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WINNING SMILES — Cohasset High hoop rooters, from left, Leslie Carroll, Erin O'Brien and Wendy O'Neill beam broadly as the Skippers wrapped up a record winning season and qualified for the schoolboy tournament. (Blaisdell photo)

Tidal Rave... New CHS Chronicle

If you are up on local slang and especially if you are a student at Cohasset High School, your response to "What's the rave?" might very well be, "Why, the Tidal Rave, of course."

The Tidal Rave, the High School's new newspaper, has just celebrated its premiere edition. The title reflects its contemporary staff and contributors: "Rave is a term peculiar among the youth of Cohasset and refers to the recent goings-on: 'Tidal connotes Cohasset's affiliation with the sea."

The new name also signifies a fresh start and a distinction from CHS's old newspaper High Times, according to the paper's co-editors. Apparently interest in the Times waned several

years ago when social and educational turmoil, the issues to which the paper was devoted, ebbed.

Instead, as co-editor Chris Williams notes in his Rave article, "Yes, Virginia, There is a School Newspaper," the paper "is the fresh attempt on the part of several interested active students to band together a school publication in order to portray day-to-day student life as it occurs, free from propagandist ulterior motives."

Banding together of students to make a newspaper is precisely what happened; the culmination of their efforts which began last October and with the assistance of two advisors finally yielded the six page tabloid

publication last week, selling at ten cents a copy. The co-editors are: Senior Dennis Valdes (a Philippine exchange student); Juniors Peg Atkinson, Connie Grant, David McCarthy,

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Stockbridge Duties Outlined

Selectmen this week amended their appointment of Lt. Charles Stockbridge as the person in charge of the Police Department while Chief Feola is on vacation.

Lt. Stockbridge began performing the duties of the Chief as of Feb. 18 and was to receive an appropriate salary adjustment. During the temporary appointment, Stockbridge is to receive no additional pay benefits, such as overtime.

Several weeks ago Stockbridge was appointed lieutenant in charge of the department. Stockbridge had said he wasn't willing to give up the differential he receives for working a night time shift, a percentage which amounts to \$25 per week.

He continued to work his regular 4 p.m. to midnight shift and received a lieutenant's salary with the under-

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MEN FROM MARS? Not really. They are, from left, Erin Diane, Garrett Noon, clad for the icy weather last week. Note their canine companion doesn't even seem bothered. (Greg Derr photo)